

# WESTERN PEOPLE

Supplement to The Western Producer

Sept. 28, 2000



## IN PROGRESS

**JOHN GERBRANDT'S 18-YEAR PROJECT**

3



## Feature

— Many churches in small communities are having problems hanging on.

6

## Humor

— Rita Toews has one of those days.

8

## Cover Story

— John Gerbrandt's house of faith, hope and charity.

### COVER PHOTO

*The house that John Gerbrandt is building.*  
Photo by Karen Morrison. Story, page 8.

Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome

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10

## Memory

— Eric Nelson recalls the incident that got him hooked on motorcycles.

11

## Prairie Nights

— What to look for in the prairie night sky.

12

## Garden Chat

— All about lilies. Or at least all we can tell you in 608 words or less.

13

## KIDSPIN!

— Art and activities for youth.

15

## Puzzles and Mailbox

# Dear Reader

So maybe you're wondering about the photo contest. The *Western People* photo contest that you saw advertised in these pages all summer. I'm here to tell you that the entries are in, the deadline has passed, the first cut of pictures has been made, and the universe is unfolding as best it can. The Oct. 19 issue will tell all, although the winners will be notified privately before that time.

Since I looked at every one of the 3,290 entries, I feel qualified to make the following statement:

### KIDS RULE.

Kids in the meadow, kids in the barn, kids in the wheat slash

canola slash oats slash barley slash flax, kids in the tub, kids holding their kitty slash puppy slash gerbil, kids sleeping the sleep of angels, kids in the mud, kids in the snow, kids at the beach, kids among the cows, kids riding horses, kids dressed up in strange regalia, kids inheriting the Earth through photography.

Kids weren't—necessarily—the subject of the contest. The scope was broader than that. People of the West, to be exact. But it was no surprise that children, as a subject, dominated the entries—probably by three-to-one. Kids and film go together like ham and eggs. And everybody is proud of their kids, at least I hope so. Our own lives might have taken on a

## Listening

Again and yet again  
The whistle of the train  
Splits the morning sky  
Of fall.

Some say it is a lonely call.  
Not I.  
I hold the hand of Nature—  
Together—we listen.

Leaves, flamboyant as a swirl  
Of gypsy dancers,  
Hold their breath  
As we listen.

Morning dewdrops  
—Sun-burst diamonds—  
Glisten in short-lived glory  
As we listen.

Living fields,  
Waiting to answer the call  
of fall, pause—  
And we listen.

Again and yet again—  
—Pure and free—  
The whistle calls.  
Calls for you—calls for me.

Maybe you find  
This call to the sky  
A lonely call.  
But not if you love it—as I.

— Adelaide Schartner

bit of water, so it's natural to invest hope in a new generation.

Some oddities noted while scanning those 3,290 entries:

- The grand total of curling pictures was one. Has curling really gone the way of the snood?

- Grandparents were under-represented.

- A great many pictures used a prop of some kind. Kitties were more popular than puppies. There was one 37-pound cat and one (large) pet pig roaming around someone's kitchen.

Thanks to all who shared a piece of their lives by way of our little contest. Check this space again on Oct. 19.

Michael Gillgannon

# The little church in peril

By Darlene Polachic



Mary Puto has become the unofficial voice for keeping Hafford area churches open in the face of dwindling congregations.

She said people were shocked when rumors began circulating that the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy planned to close churches that were no longer viable.

Puto was especially concerned. St. Peter and St. Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church of Albertown, Sask., has been her church since her marriage 41 years ago to Steve Puto. Her own home church of St. John the Baptist at Alticane was also in jeopardy.

Structurally, St. Peter and St. Paul is unchanged from its early days. Built in 1927 to serve the largely Ukrainian local population, the church still has no power, no source of heat other than a pot-bellied stove at the back. The hand-made pews are original, as are the gold-leafed icons and the 12 cherubs that decorate



St. John the Baptist Church, Alticane, Sask. Photo by Elaine Shein



Darlene Polachic

the tongue-in-groove V-joint ceiling.

What has changed is church attendance. Where once the church was packed on a regular basis, now two dozen is a nice crowd — and Albertown is one of the more active parishes in the pastoral district of Hafford.

The district's five churches have been served by the Rev. Father Dominic Mazun for the past 20 years. One of the churches, the Velychko Church, has been designated a heritage site, and sees only one mass a year.

A committee of three is visiting and photographing abandoned and inactive Ukrainian Catholic churches throughout Saskatchewan, itemizing their contents, and assessing whether or not they are structurally sound enough to remain open, said Puto.

Due to Alticane's declining membership, it now holds only one divine liturgy with cemetery services on its *praznyk* or feast day. The committee was receptive to having the church remain open and continue the yearly service, provided the membership would be responsible for maintenance

and upkeep.

"They agreed [keeping the church open] would be of spiritual and social value to families who return for the annual service," Puto said.

The traditional feast day is considered the most important day of the religious year for Ukrainian Catholic churches. The Albertown church holds its celebration July 12, the traditional feast day of Sts. Peter and Paul, after whom the church is named.

The summer event began with divine liturgy in the little church at 10 a.m. led by Rev. Mazun, followed by a procession into the church yard and blessing of the water. Then, everyone moved to the cemetery area behind the church for *moleben* or the cemetery service where each grave is blessed and a prayer spoken for the deceased.

The religious part over, the crowd then trooped across the road to the church hall for a barbecue and a time of fellowship.

Susan Babiay of Saskatoon took the day off work without pay to be at the Albertown Feast Day to honor her father, who was an elder of the church

40 years ago. She also put flowers on the graves of her two brothers who are also buried in the cemetery. "In the old days, we used to go to the neighboring homes to eat," she says.

Eight of her siblings joined her. "Feast days are opportunities for pulling families together," she says. "It's like a family reunion. As we get older, we want to get back to our roots."

The family still pays memberships to this church.

Babiay says the Albertown church is still open because of people like Victor Hupaelo, the president of the church, and Trudy and Eddie Hupaelo. Eddie is vice-president and Trudy organizes all the social activities.

The next generation of Hupaelos — Steven, Jesse, and Cody — are altar servers. Walter Woytiuk is preparing to turn over the church cantor role to Darlene Hupaelo, a recently retired teacher.

Puto believes having young people in the church gives a congregation optimism for the future. "Young people are going to where the jobs are and that's not the local community. Depopula-

tion is making it impossible to keep many village churches open.

"Churches need people—people who are committed enough to attend services and be involved in the upkeep of church, and committed enough to find ways of getting finances so these things can happen."

Puto believes St. Peter and St. Paul is particularly blessed. "We have a wonderful advantage here . . . young families in the community who are involving their children, and far away members who come back and contribute. We also have an active ladies' committee that does what has to be done."

"If we're low on funds, members donate. Or, we'll do fundraising."

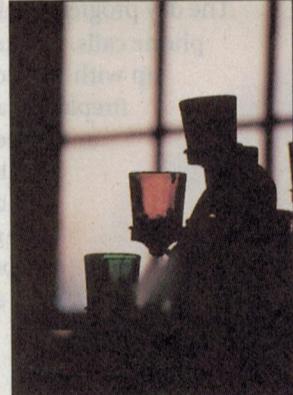
They hold concessions at local auctions, and sell *Treasured Recipes*, a cookbook in its third printing.

The collection, Puto's brain-child, includes "old" recipes from past and current church members and their families.

"Businesses in town volunteered to sell it for us. And one member in Saskatoon sold 150. She did it because she lost a child while they were living in this community. The child is buried in our cemetery and this is her way of remembering and honoring that."

In years past, the church held perogiy suppers and dances to raise money, but that became too difficult without a proper kitchen.

"Besides, the



Elaine Shein

turnout was always so big we couldn't accommodate them all in the hall and do the justice to the event."

St. Peter and St. Paul is only open in the warmer months. Two services a month are held beginning around Easter with Confession and Blessing of the Baskets. By the end of October, the church is closed for the winter.

But the church community remains strong all year long and that is what keeps churches alive, said Puto.

Victor Hupaelo, church president, calls it a small, miniature community. Membership is small, but constant. Some church members live as far away as Saskatoon and Blaine Lake, and only come out on Feast Day.

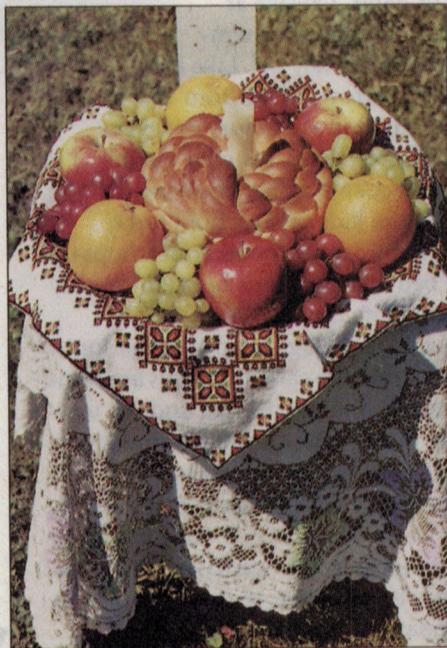
**T**rudy Hupaelo said there are some who book holidays for the celebration every year. She says the church is special to her because "the roots of my husband's family are here. My kids find it a special place, too. I believe it is important to keep our culture and religious heritage alive."

Puto worries the current farm economy could put the future of rural churches at risk. Families need to make a decent living in order to maintain institutions like the church.

"We need religion because it teaches us values and strengthens our families. We need the fellowship and the faith in God to get us through the difficult times."



Darlene Polachic



Darlene Polachic

**Mary Puto (l) and Trudy Hupaelo;**  
**food to be blessed.**



Elaine Shein

The security alarm is shrieking; my emergency contact is out of cellular range; the dog has retreated into a corner and is howling his pathetic protest; the house reeks of burned garlic and most of my body parts feel as though they've gone through a blender. To add to the madness, the carpets are wet and condensation has misted the windows.

This day, one that started with so much promise, has become a nightmare.

The day began innocently enough.

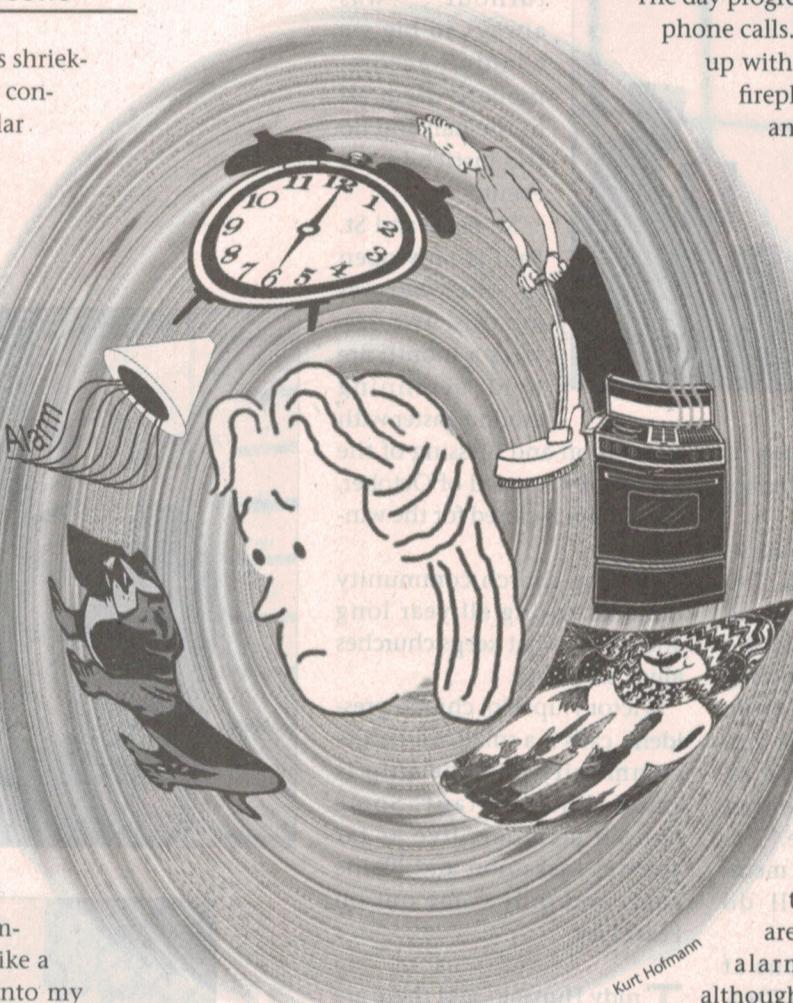
Out of habit, I awake at 6:30 a.m., but then remember that it is my day off. Like a squirrel, I burrow deeper into my bed, anticipating the luxury of several more hours of sleep. It's cold outside. I'm warm and cozy and my husband will be dropping the kids off at school today.

Digger, my canine foot-warmer, hops up on the bed and positions himself expertly at my feet. Life is good.

At 9 a.m., I emerge from hibernation. I remember that the carpet cleaners are coming today. The sun is shining and the temperature outside has shot up dramatically.

At 11 a.m., the phone rings and a flat, disinterested I've-done-this-so-many-times-before voice informs me that the long awaited family-photo cards are ready for pick-up. "Be here before five if you want them today," she says.

Several weeks ago the family had agonized over the proofs of a photo studio sitting without being able to reach a consensus as to which pose would become our Christmas card. In the end, much to the dismay of the two kids, my husband exercised his option of an extra vote, and had made the decision on our collective behalf. Now, at last, the cards are ready for claiming.



The day progresses leisurely. A few chatty phone calls. I indulge myself and curl up with the dog and a book. The fireplace crackles — all is silent and at peace.

Reality check. The carpet cleaners arrive and begin the cleaning process. Phew, what an unpleasant smell! They finish the upstairs rooms and work their way down the stairs to the ceramic tile at the entry. Meanwhile, I decide to pre-cook some chicken and garlic portions for supper.

Wham!! An ear piercing, glass shattering, one million megahertz wail splits the air. For an instant the cleaners, the dog and I are motionless. The security alarm has been triggered although it isn't turned on.

My brain goes into fast forward — "30 seconds to report false alarm! police will come! phone monitoring company! turn siren off! where's the phone! can't hear!" Frantic fingers fly over the non-responsive control panel. The carpet cleaners stand riveted, too scared to move. I can't use the phone downstairs to report a false alarm because the klaxon of the alarm is right under the telephone table and it continues to scream! I have to use the phone upstairs.

I cross the hallway to the bottom of the stairs at a run and WHAP! I'm in a crumpled heap on the tile floor with only one shoe on, the other skitters across the floor and makes a quick exit from the scene into the living-room. A tiny, devious stream of water has escaped from the cleaners' machine onto the tile and it has been lying in wait for this very moment. Its nefarious deed has been accomplished in a second but the repercussions will continue for weeks. I manage to navigate the water-soaked carpeted stairs with the grace of a three-legged dog on my twisted ankle. I still have one shoe on.

## Momma told me there would be days like this

In the bedroom, I blabber breathless gibberish into the phone to the monitoring company, believing myself to be totally coherent. A calm voice, long accustomed to handling crisis calls, begins the process of ascertaining my problem with only minimal assistance from me.

She manages to calm me down and sort out my message. I'm then assured that yes, she does understand and yes, something is definitely wrong with the system if the horn won't shut off. She instructs me to telephone the company who sold the system to us.

The brain-numbing wailing continues downstairs as I dial the security company phone number. No one is in the office, a machine explains. "For an emergency please dial . . ." I follow the instructions and explain my problem to the voice at the other end of the line. "What's the control panel doing now?" I'm asked. Well, to answer that is a problem. The panel is downstairs and I'm upstairs.

Furthermore, several areas of my body are now letting me know that they also came in contact with the ceramic tile floor. A lot more than my ankle seems to have been wrenched in the fall. To examine the panel I make my way down the wet stairs at a considerably slower speed than when I went up.

The carpet cleaners are in the middle of the family room looking somewhat embarrassed; an unpleasant vapor hangs in the air and the dog has retreated into a corner with his head thrown back, howling a discordant lament to whoever can hear him above the din.

The control panel is flashing like a circus carousel, emitting little incomprehensible burps and blips. Grabbing the kitchen extension, I am about to describe the control panel, when from the corner of my eye I see smoke spiraling from the forgotten pan on the stove.

Suddenly I realize that the aroma I have been smelling is burnt garlic!

"Get the stove! Shut off the stove!" I scream to whoever is nearest at hand. One of the cleaners rushes to comply. At the other end of the phone the representative explains how to disconnect

the battery pack (which is in the basement) from the alarm.

"It's very simple, all you need is a square-headed screwdriver."

I shout the news to the carpet cleaners and ask them if they have a "square" screwdriver. Inexplicably, before we can act, the wailing ceases and all is quiet.

Mouths gaping, we stare at each other in shock.

I try to report this new development to the security company but the phone is now dead. As dead as the security panel! With relief, I notice one of the carpet cleaners has a cellular dangling from his belt.

"The battery is dead," he advises.

The thought flashes through my over-taxed brain that it makes an odd ornament on his belt if it's dead. I tug my boots over a rapidly swelling ankle and limp next door to use the neighbors' phone.

My phone call to the security company results in a recorded message informing me that the recipient of the call is currently out of range, but if I leave a message they'll get back to me when they return to range.

I can now hear the wailing of the siren from my house—it's back on. I hobble back to a house that is once again in a state of uproar.

The carpet cleaners have now had enough of the whole mess and are gathering up their equipment to make their escape.

"Oh no you don't!" I spit at cleaner No. 1 as I grab his arm.

"Where's your square screwdriver! You're disconnecting the battery downstairs before you leave!"

We go down to the basement and take one of the leads off the battery pack. Mercifully, the noise stops. Cleaner #2 feels it's important to assure me that I needn't worry about their bill — they'll leave it in the mailbox and I can send them a cheque in the mail when I get a moment. They leave. The dog shuts up. Silence.

I sag onto a stair beside the control panel. Slowly, cool moisture seeps into my jeans where I've made contact with the wet carpeting. I don't have enough energy left to care.

Then, unbelievably, inconceivably, I hear ominous tiny burps and beeps from the control panel! It's slowly strug-

gling to life! It's a living organism that refuses to die! Lights begin flashing as the blips gain volume and strength! It gives birth to an ear shattering wail that once again fills the house. The dog loses bladder control on the clean carpet then retreats to the safety of his corner. I try the phone. It's dead.

In a frenzy, I lurch down the basement stairs and begin flipping fuse box switches. On the fourth try the wailing is cut short. I try the phone and am granted a miracle — it works. The voice at the security company, which is so calm that it's irritating, assures me they will send someone out this evening.

"Something might be wrong," she says.

"Something is wrong!" I hiss through clenched teeth.

I gain control of myself and phone central monitoring to tell them I've disabled the alarm system and they are to disregard any messages they may be receiving. "Please don't send the police."

"Well, Mrs. Toews, the only message we've received from your system today is when it was turned off this morning at 7:15." That's when the family left the house! Yes, something is definitely wrong.

I realize that if I leave now I'll be able to pick up the family Christmas cards before I collect my daughter from her piano lesson. I grab my coat and hobble to the car. The thought crosses my mind that I might not be able to get my boot off later. Is the ankle broken?

I struggle into the photo studio and I am handed my photos in a neat box. One photo is drawn out for inspection. As I look at it a mental alarm goes off, but all I can really concentrate on are the aches in my body.

When I collect my daughter from her piano lesson, she immediately grabs the box of photos. "Oh no Mom!" she shrieks. "It's the wrong picture. You got the wrong picture developed!"

Weeks of waiting and they've developed the wrong pose! Fifty-five Christmas cards of the worst possible pose of the entire photo shoot.

I giggle hysterically as I carefully make the drive home. After all, there are several hours left in this day and so much can still go wrong.



John Gerbrandt's gables house in Herbert, Sask., takes up two lots.

# Faith, hope and charity

*John Gerbrandt's house started out as 'something to do.' That was 18 years ago . . .*

By Karen Morrison

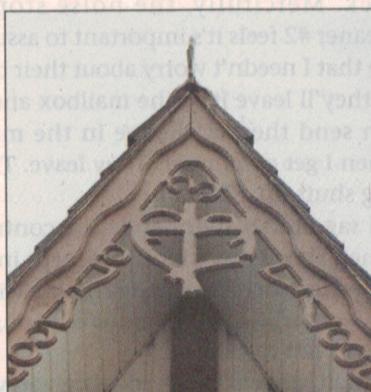
The house in Herbert, Sask. has seven levels, not including the attic, and 7,000 square feet of floor space. Its builder, 77-year-old great-grandfather John Gerbrandt, has been working on it for 18 years. He has already spent close to \$130,000 on the project and needs another \$77,000 to complete it.

The House of Faith, Hope and Charity, as Gerbrandt calls it, started as something to keep his spirit and body going through some dark days and has become a religious mission. He hopes the house, sprinkled liberally with Christian symbols, will bring people together and provide opportunities to learn more about the Bible. "I hope the place will continue to tell its story long after I'm gone," said Gerbrandt, a

devout Mennonite.

He and his wife Mary had hoped to move in one day, but with the interior just a mass of recycled grey timbers, that seems unlikely.

Plagued with a constricted esophagus, heart attack and hernia, numerous sur-



"The sun"—crucifixion and a broken heart.

geries and the deaths of a brother and son, Gerbrandt began the project "for something to do" after seeing an ad in *The Western Producer* selling the local Saskatchewan Wheat Pool elevator. "Your spiritual house has to be maintained as well as your physical being," explained Gerbrandt. "I try to exercise both."

He saw the elevator demolition as a chance to sell off old lumber but then he found 14 timbers measuring 14 feet by 14 inches wide.

They became the House of Faith, Hope and Charity's foundation, representing the 14 generations in the Bible from Abraham to David. Sales of the remaining wood helped buy building materials and tools.

There are numerous religious references in his blueprint—some planned like the "Trinity" doors and "Colors of

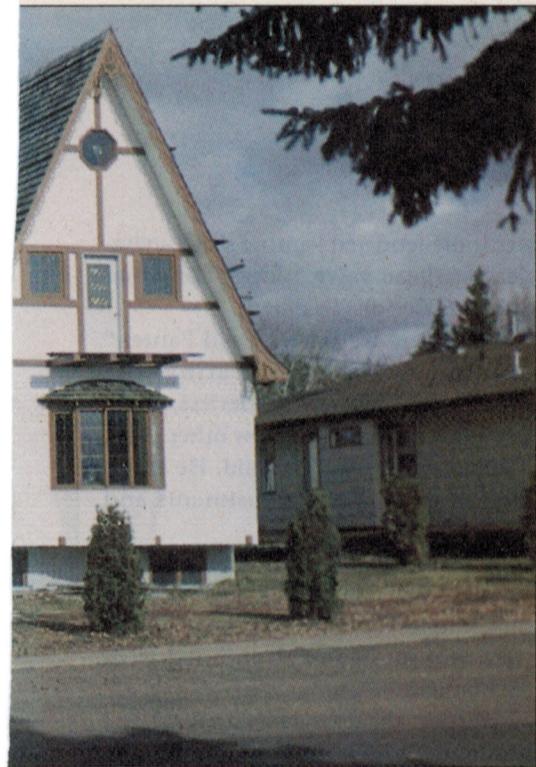


Photo courtesy Clara Butler

"Royalty" windows, and others that just happened (the 14 timbers).

He fashioned the three gables facing Herbert Street to represent the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The trim pieces feature hearts and crosses and are lined with 3s, "God's working number," and 7s. These numbers figure prominently throughout the Scriptures.

Every seventh row of roof shingles is doubled, to represent how God created the Earth in a week and rested on the seventh day.

The white siding covering the home that spills over two town lots reflects the color of baptism.

The seven junipers in a roughly landscaped front yard were planted to signify everlasting life, but they keep dying. "Maybe I was meant to have just three," Gerbrandt said.

He has never faltered in his vision: "I could always see it as it is now. There's always a reason why people do certain things."

His determination comes from grim beginnings, war service, religious persecution and abiding faith. "Christ gives me strength," he said.

He was born in Manitoba and moved with his family of nine to Saskatchewan in 1929. His mother died, leaving children from seven months old to 14 years to be spread between relatives. There

were only occasional visits with his own family.

He was seven when he came to the Herbert district and worked for his room and board for the next 12 years, driving equipment and horses. He got no further than Grade 6 in school.

"I never learned anything but work," he said of those hard years growing up. "I'm just a Mennonite. I didn't know how to do anything but work."

At age 21, he married in a 1943 blizzard. Twenty-five years later, they had their 12th and final child. The war came and Gerbrandt was ostracized for his conscientious objector status. The dairy farmer the couple worked for cut their wages after their first child was born, saying Mary was not able to do her share. Gerbrandt desperately needed the money and therefore joined the army.

Despite his war service, including front line combat and being wounded in Belgium, he did not receive land through the Veterans Land Act upon his return. He built up his farm to 22 quarters and in later years ran the town's grocery store with his sons before it shut down.

His latest work has received mixed reviews from the town over the years and been branded with names like "Gerbrandt's Folly" and "an eyesore" that came close to being bulldozed.

These days, Herbert Mayor Dennis Kehler sees its potential as a tourist attraction and a bed and breakfast spot for the mainly Mennonite and German town of 900.

Many visitors drive off the highway

to check on its progress, he said.

"A few years ago, I thought he never would have got it done," Kehler conceded, but noted Gerbrandt has made great progress in recent years on the exterior.

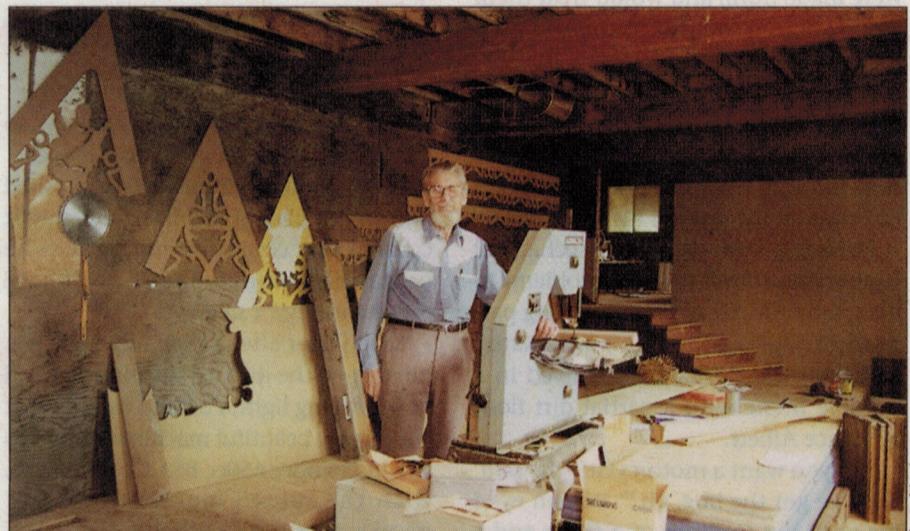
"It's an incredible building," he said. "It would be nice to see it done. He actually has to get it done to make it a viable place."

Kehler said there is little the town can do to help Gerbrandt, who is "very stubborn and does all of the work himself." But Herbert plans to list the site alongside other attractions like the 1912 CP rail station on its web site's tourism page at [www3.sk.sympatico.ca/capone](http://www3.sk.sympatico.ca/capone).

Gerbrandt said the local bank has extended as much credit as it's going to so he must now turn to private investors to help him realize his dream. There have been a handful of small donations over the years and minimal help with the construction, which has mainly been carried by Gerbrandt using his current house in town as collateral.

Gerbrandt and Kehler are both optimistic that investors are out there if they hear about it.

It may also take a little divine intervention and a lot of faith to finish the megaproject in Gerbrandt's lifetime, something he is clearly banking on: "It's exactly seven minutes after one," he observes as he pulls away from the House of Faith, Hope and Charity in his red sedan, bound for an auction in town.



There is much work left to do inside the seven-level house.

# No greater love...

Memory by Eric Nelson

**B**ack then the raging affliction often came at 13 or 14 among North American males, and the bug bit hard. A life-long malady was not unusual.

For good reason. Little compares to the feeling of freedom and the open road riding a motorcycle on a warm day. With the wind in your face and the miles clicking by, bombarding you with grass, trees and fresh water scents, the sky and road and life seem boundless; especially with a good-looking partner snuggled up behind you.

Hundreds or maybe thousands of budding teenagers in the 1950s, many from farms around Western Canada, were obsessed with motorcycles. I was one. Every time I went to Saskatoon with my parents I had to visit Nicholson Brothers Motorcycles.

I would stand there reverently ogling the shiny machines, the Triumphs, Ariels, BSAs and Sunbeams. I would run my fingers over handlebars and gas tanks and fenders, dreaming. On one trip, I bought a pair of goggles, in anticipation of the day I would have a motorcycle to go with them.

I can still remember the pleasant, distinctive scent of the poly-plastic they were made from, and would wear them while pouring over the Nicholson catalogue back home.

A school friend in Prince Albert, Sask., told me about Harold Wilson and his motorcycles, so at age 14, with my passion running hot one spring evening, I knocked on the door of his small house.

He was a small-statured mechanical genius who solved calculus problems in his spare time. He also quoted long passages of Shakespeare to his wife Kathy and their dog Snooky. They lived in a humble home with a partial dirt floor in Prince Albert.

"So you want a motorcycle?" he said. "You've got the bug, eh?" Wilson eyed me with the makings of a smile and a roll-yer-own cigarette in a corner of his

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mouth. His head was tilted sideways so the rising smoke would miss his eyes.

I had wondered if the rickety old shed occupying part of the backyard might contain the "couple" of motorcycles he usually had lying around. "I don't have much money," I said.

Much later after a visit and some tea, he opened the door of the old shed and in the fading light, I beheld two of what were to me beautiful machines. One was a twin-cylinder 650cc BSA Golden Flash, with the folded metal or "eyelid" nacelle over the headlight. The other, beside it but not quite as complete, was

a chrome-fendered Panther single-cylinder, overhead valve "sloper," of either 500 or 600cc displacement.

"And here we have an old Panter," Harold laughed, indicating the machine, which was fenderless, without lights and missing a few other parts. "The Bee-zer runs," he said. He straddled it, made a few adjustments and kicked it over.

"RRVVVRRROOR!" The old shed was suddenly filled with a huge roar and blue smoke from the twin chrome mufflers and my stomach jumped with excitement.

"What about the 'Panter'?" I shouted. "Does it run too?"

Harold shut the BSA off, sat back in the saddle and through the settling fog dragged on his stained cigarette. "Well now, there is an interesting case. It needs a magneto, actually a dyna-mag, but it's a Miller abortion and you can't buy parts for it. They don't make them anymore, all Lucas contraptions now, wouldn't you know it, those Limeys."

"Is it for sale?"

"Well now I might consider selling it 'as is,' because you do seem to have rather a severe case. And you might, I say might, be able to find parts or a mag around for it some place."

The next Saturday I listed my old CCM balloon-tired bicycle in Dale Yoos's weekly Saturday afternoon auction. My parents had bought me the bike new, when I was eight, but I did not ride it much anymore. Somebody bought it and I took the \$19 up to the Wilsons that night and said, "It's not much but is it enough for you to keep it for me, until I get some more?"

Harold took a blank sheet of paper and started writing on it. When he finished he handed it to me.

"For one 1940 Panther motorcycle, 500cc, sold unencumbered and 'as is' to Eric Nelson. Full price of nineteen dollars. (\$19)."

Dated and Signed, Harold Wilson.

(Long time freelance writer Eric Nelson works from his home in Prince Albert, Sask.)

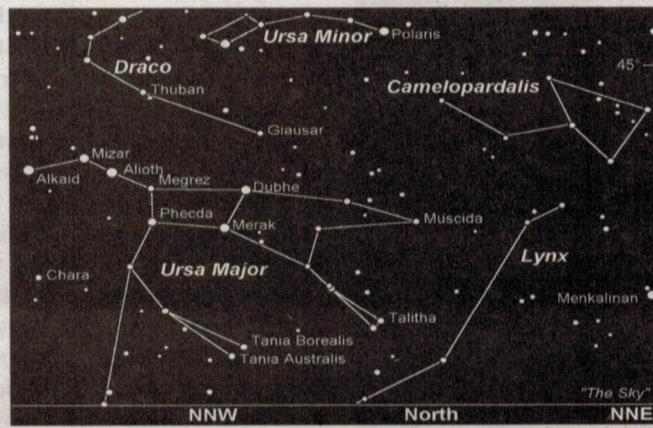
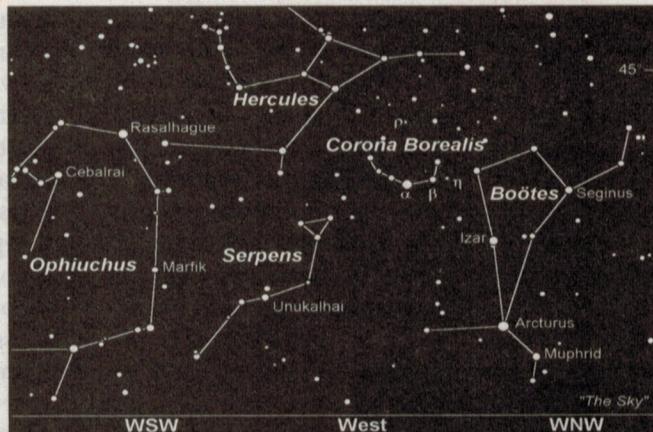
# A CROWN OF STARS

By Stan Shadick

**A**n ancient Greek myth relates the story of Princess Ariadne who was the daughter of King Minos of Crete. She fell in love with Theseus, who had killed the evil Minotaur—a gruesome creature with the head of a bull and the body of a man. After visiting the wine god Dionysus on the island of Naxos, Ariadne awoke to find her lover gone. Enraged at being left behind, she promised to marry Dionysus if he could prove he was a god. He did so by tossing his crown into the heavens where its jewels became the stars of Corona Borealis constellation.

This month we can view the dim semi-circle of stars that make up Corona Borealis constellation. Look for it in the western sky between the constellations of Hercules, the strong man, and Boötes, the herdsman.

The brightest jewel in the crown is the Alphecca binary star system that is sometimes called Gemma. It is marked on our star map with the Greek letter alpha ( $\alpha$ ), its alternate name introduced by the English astronomer royal, Johann Bayer. The brighter star of this binary system is about three times larger than the Sun and radiates about 50 times as much light. Its companion is a golden star like the Sun that orbits its neighbor every 17 days. On each passage, the smaller star partially covers the



**Top: Corona Borealis above western horizon, two hours after sunset in October.**  
**Bottom: Ursa Major above northern horizon.**

larger star causing the brightness of the system to fade slightly in a stellar eclipse.

Situated 75 light-years from Earth, Alphecca belongs to the Ursa Major moving cluster—a swarm of stars through which our solar system is passing. Some other members of this cluster include the middle five stars in the Big Dipper (Mizar, Alioth, Megrez, Pheca and Merak).

According to a Shawnee legend, Corona Borealis represents a basket of stars that transported 12 celestial sisters between the heavens and the earth. Alphecca, the youngest and most beautiful of the sisters, married the great hunter Waupee (White Hawk) who is represented by the giant star Arcturus in neighboring Boötes.

Alphecca's neighbouring star Nusakan is identified on the star map with the Greek letter  $\beta$  in accordance with Bayer's convention. Its starlight is a century old, having begun its journey across the 100 light-year gulf to Earth in the last year of the 19th century. It has a very strong magnetic field that reverses polarity every 18.5 days. A companion star revolves around it every 10.5 years.

With binoculars you may also spot the star  $\rho$  Coronae Borealis. A planet with a mass about 50 percent greater than Jupiter orbits the sunlike star every 40 days. This hot planet is separated from the star by a distance of only one quarter of Earth's distance from the Sun.

Some Chinese called this constellation T'ien-wei, the Celestial Jail. The door to the prison was marked by the  $\eta$  Coronae Borealis binary star system—a pair of sunlike stars that circuit each other every 42 years. They were happy when they could not see this star system because it meant that the prison door was open.

Other cultures had many different names for Corona Borealis constellation. To the Chukchee people of Siberia, the constellation portrayed a polar bear's paw. I expect that many prairie farmers might suggest that it be nicknamed the Horseshoe constellation. ■

By Sara Williams

Prairie plant breeders are recognized worldwide for their work in the development of Asiatic hybrid lilies—garden cultivars descended from ruggedly tough species native to Asia and able to flourish under our similar long, cold winters, and hot, dry summers.

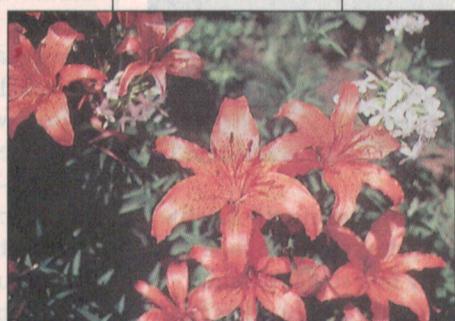
Among the most outstanding of these hybridizers was Dr. Albert ("Bert") Porter of Honeywood Lilies near Parkside, Sask. An unassuming man who liked nothing more than to work among his plants, he has been honored nationally and internationally.

Born in England, Porter came to Canada in 1907 at the age of six. Although he became a qualified teacher, jobs were hard to come by in the Thirties. Communities were short of cash and teachers were plentiful.

He remembered receiving a polite but negative reply to one application. Although he was well qualified, the local school board was all bachelors and preferred a female teacher.

Porter began his nursery in 1934, and by the 1950s, was immersed in lily breeding. Among his more famous lilies are Earlibird, Suntan, Red Carpet, Happy Thoughts and Flaming Giant.

In 1998, Diann Putland of Hillcrest Harmony Flowers near Churchbridge, Sask.,



**Top: "Happy Thoughts."**

**Bottom: "Flaming Giant."**

introduced "Dr. Porter," an up-facing Asiatic hybrid lily of three feet, that she had selected from seed obtained from the North American Lily Society. Bright orange with some spotting and frosty nectary, it blooms early (late June) and contains a large percentage of Earlibird in its parentage.

Porter passed away in August, just a few months short of his 100th birthday. He left behind a living legacy that gardeners the world over, and particularly on the Canadian Prairies, will enjoy for many generations.

Asiatic lilies (contained in division one of specialty catalogs) are classified according to their flower placement. Class-a have up-facing flowers. These are showy in the garden and attractive in arrangements

but have fewer flowers per stem and a relatively shorter blooming period. Class-b lilies are outward-facing. They have more flowers per stem, a longer season of bloom, and make good cut flowers. Class-c are downward-facing: outstanding in the border but are not considered as good in the vase.

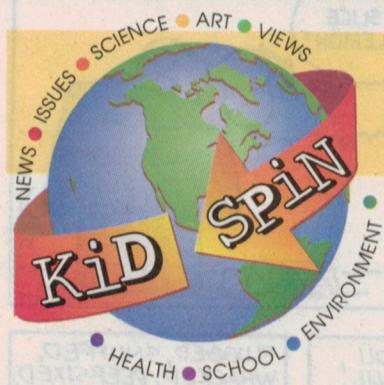
Fall is the time to purchase and plant lily bulbs, available from garden centres, specialty mail order catalogs, and regional lily societies. Lilies never go completely dormant, so plant them as soon after purchase as possible.

Their demands are minimal:

a sunny location and well drained soil. Once established, they are amazingly drought-tolerant. Preparing the planting bed well initially will reward you with abundant lilies in years to come. Dig it to a depth of at least 12 inches, incorporating generous amounts of compost or peat moss. Smaller bulbs should be planted at a depth of about four inches and larger ones to six inches. If your soil is sandier or they're in a windy location, planting depth can be increased. Place them about 12-18 inches apart, to allow room once they begin to multiply. Fertilize with bone meal or a high phosphorous granular fertilizer (not in direct contact with the bulb) such as 11-48-0, 16-20-0, or 9-9-6.

Water well, to the depth of the bulb and into the soil below. Mulching the soil surface with a few inches of peat moss conserves moisture and usually delays the emergence of bulbs late enough in the spring to avoid frost damage.

For more information and to take advantage of bulb sales, you might want to join a local lily society. In Manitoba, contact Marlene Puls (204-269-3499; 99 Macalester Bay, Winnipeg R3T 2X6); in Saskatchewan, Art Delahey (306-374-0494, 18 Pony Trail, Riverside Estates, Saskatoon S7T 1A2) or Maida Gardner (306-586-5703, Box 22152, Regina S4S 7H4); and in Alberta, Lil McLean (780-467-2660). ■



mail: P.O. Box 2500, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 2C4  
e-mail: [kidspin@producer.com](mailto:kidspin@producer.com)  
phone: 1-800-667-6978 or (306) 665-3543  
fax: (306) 934-2401 (no art by fax, please)  
KidSPIN co-ordinator: Kurt Hofmann

The Kids' Help Phone is free, it's confidential, and it's 24 hours a day. A friend is always on the other end of the line.

**1-800-668-6868**

## Student-savvy tips for surfing the web

### Other educational websites to visit

[www.thegreenpages.ca](http://www.thegreenpages.ca) is a Canadian environmental website developed as an informational resource for students that provides news and links to other environmental websites. Although it won't be officially launched until Earth Day, April 22, 2001, there is a lot of good information currently available.

[www.cassa-resources.net](http://www.cassa-resources.net) offers those involved in student activity councils new ideas for student events and also offers a variety of student leadership links.

[www.kidscom.com](http://www.kidscom.com) offers children safety tips as well as host of other interactive games for kids to play along with.

[www.atlas.gc.ca](http://www.atlas.gc.ca) is an interactive, online atlas which helps students learn about Canada's geography through text and maps. The site offers an interactive mapping tool, Canadian facts and a quiz which tests students on various Canadian facts.

[www.forum.swarthmore.edu/students/](http://www.forum.swarthmore.edu/students/) offers student online help with difficult math questions. The site is divided into various age and skill levels so there is help for everyone from simple math to difficult calculus question. The site also offers math tips and tricks and brain teasers.

[www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html](http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html) offers a list of commonly misused words in the English language and examples of how to use them correctly. The site also offers links to other grammar-related sites.



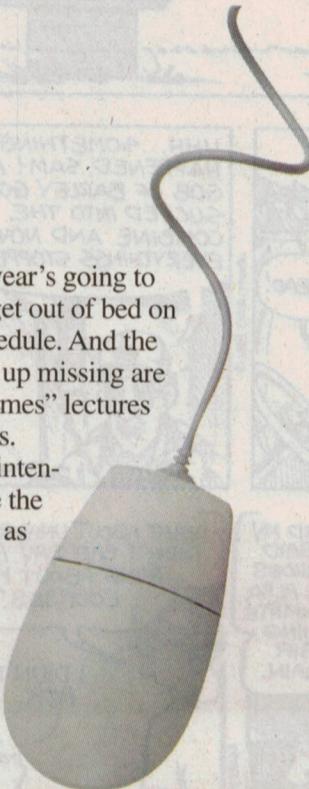
You swear . . . this school year's going to be different. You're going to get out of bed on time and turn things in on schedule. And the only thing that's going to turn up missing are those "I told you a thousand times" lectures from your teachers and parents.

How do you convert good intentions into good habits? Maybe the answer to getting organized is as close as your computer. Here are some Web sites that will help you get ahead of the game this school year.

**▼ SAVED BY THE BELL:** Weary of sleeping through the alarm? Then get a backup. The Web site Mr. Wakeup ([mrwakeup.com](http://mrwakeup.com)) can come to the rescue with its free wake-up call service. Sign up at the site and Mr. Wakeup will call you at the time you specify. You can get news, weather, horoscopes or personal messages to start your day right.

**▼ GET THE FACTS:** Start thinking of your computer as your 24-hour tutor. Homework help sites such as Bigchalk.com ([www.bigchalk.com](http://www.bigchalk.com)), DiscoverySchool.com ([school.discovery.com/students](http://school.discovery.com/students)) and Lightspan's Study Web ([www.studyweb.com](http://www.studyweb.com)) may have the answers when you — or your parents — are stumped.

**▼ LOOK IT UP:** If it's writing a paper that has you stressing, try Researchpaper.com ([www.researchpaper.com](http://www.researchpaper.com)). It'll give you ideas for topics, tell you how to research online and provide tips on how to organize your paper. Once you decide which subject to write about, turn to Britannica.com ([www.ebig.com](http://www.ebig.com)) to find the facts and Research It! ([www.iTools.com/research-it/research-it.html](http://www.iTools.com/research-it/research-it.html)) for the online dictionaries and thesaurus you'll need to get the words right.



— KRT

**PEANUTS**  
Classics



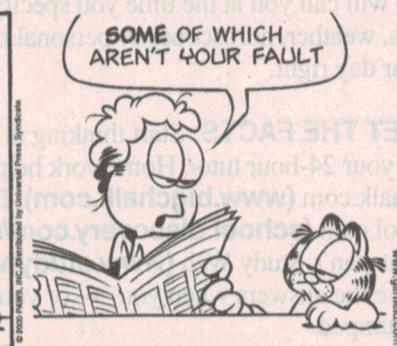
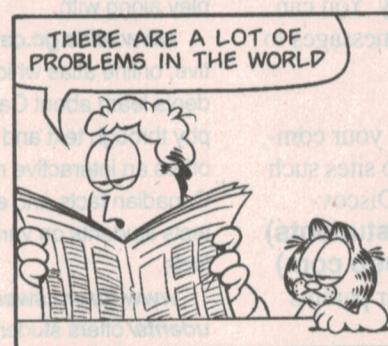
**RURAL ROOTZ**



**For BETTER  
or for  
WORSE**



**GARFIELD**

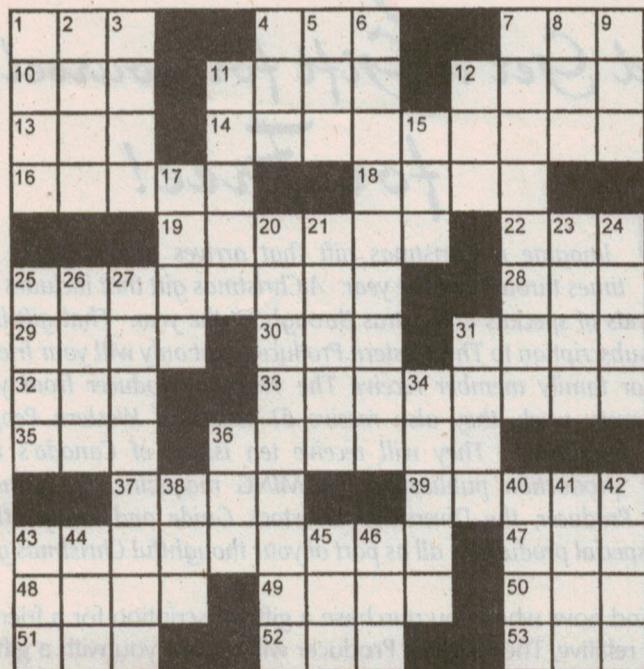


**BETTY**



# Canadian Criss Cross

by Walter D. Feener

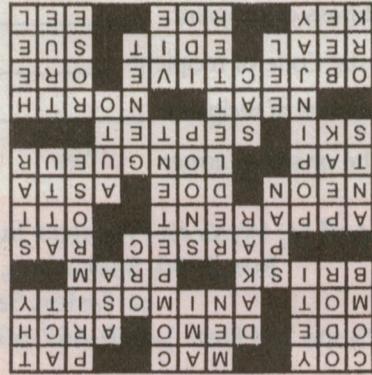


## ACROSS

- Modest
- Scottish name prefix
- Light touch
- Pindar's poem
- Recording intended to show off a song
- Principal
- Incisive remark
- Active hatred
- Energetic
- Baby carriage
- Unit of astronomical distance
- Ethiopian governor
- Plain to see
- Former Giant
- Illuminated sign
- Buck's mate
- Charles's dog
- Dance like Bojangles
- Boring section in a novel
- Emulate Debbie Armstrong
- Group of seven
- Undiluted
- British prime minister
- Goal
- Pay dirt
- Not illusory
- Prepare for publication
- Boy in a Cash

## DOWN

- Fix unkempt hair
- Olfactory perception
- Himalayan humanoid
- Work force
- Male friend
- Well qualified
- Scottish violist
- Play a part
- Commandment word
- Senegal's capital
- Botanist Gray
- Grampus
- Hand measure
- Memorably happy
- song
- Vince Gill CD (with "The")
- Caviar
- Slippery fish
- Pry
- Aleutian island
- Asterisk
- Tiny carpenters
- Summit
- Talkative, conceited one
- Self combining form
- Civet relative
- Vesicle
- Grig
- Symbol of fragrance and loveliness
- Constant
- End of a loaf of bread
- Mork's planet
- Above-average grade
- Modified Esperanto
- "La \_\_\_\_\_ rose" (Piaf song)



# MAILBOX

Listings are free but only run once. Please be brief. Issues are prepared three weeks in advance of publication date. Send info to: Mailbox, Western People, Box 2500, Saskatoon S7K 2C4.

**A Taste** of Brandon — Trinity United Church Community Cookbook, \$16. Send cheque or money order to: Trinity United Church Community Cookbook, 1515 - 6th St., Brandon, Man. R7A 6B3.

**Looking** for Stanley (Pee wee) Burns who grew up in Wilkie, Sask. and whose father owned a service station. During the late 40s he moved to B.C. Could you please provide his address. — Dave Shury, Box 1388, Battleford, Sask. S0M 0E0.

**Wanted:** Books by Nora Loft: Michael and all Angels, Blossom Like the Rose, Here was a Man, Requiem for Idols, Heaven in Your Hand, Domestic Life in England, A Calf for Venus, The Road to Revelation; writing as Peter Curtis: Dead March in Three Keys, You're Best Alone, The Little Wax Doll; writing as Juliet Astley: The Fall of Midas. Would gladly pay for plus postage. — Lew Gilbert, Box 178, Mannville, Alta. TOB 2W0, 780-593-2203.

**Searching** for father who worked on railway in late '20s in northern Manitoba. Mother Belle Phillips. — Molly Tedesco, 66 Irving Terrace, Kenmore, NY 14223.

**Wanted:** Newspapers from the 1930s, such as the Meyronne Independent and the Kincaid Star, which cover McCord, Glentworth, Mankota and other communities in south-central Saskatchewan. Will pay for photocopies and postage. Phone Christine Bye, collect, 403-208-2474 or e-mail: bye@telusplanet.net.

**Wanted:** Crochet pattern for pineapple basket with handle. — June Frost, 211 - 90 Abbott St., Penticton, B.C. V2A 7W8.

**Wanted:** Seeds or roots of any of the following climbers: Hyacinth bean, exotic love, firecracker vine, cypress vine, cathedral bell. Please write first and state price. — Blanche Pott, Box 96, Shell Lake, Sask. S0J 2G0.

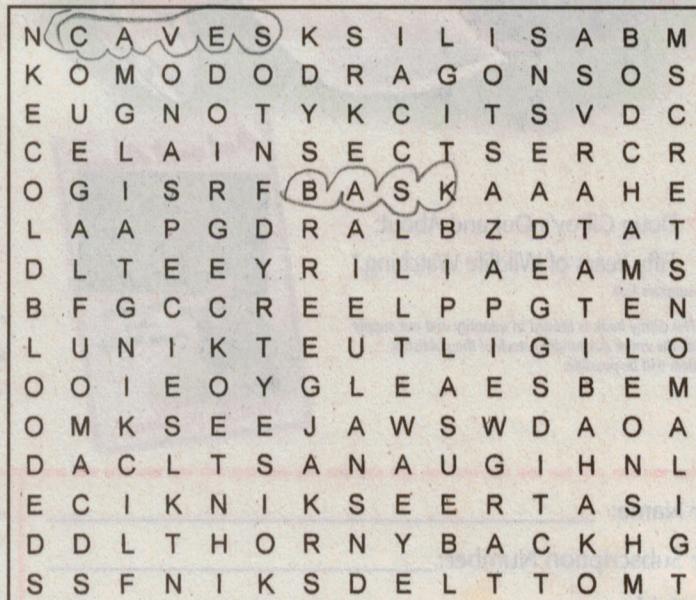
**Wanted:** Any information on hitching horse hair. Any books or advice would be appreciated. Willing to pay for books and postage. Write or call: Korie Moxham, Box 173, Ituna, Sask. S0A 1N0, 306-795-2858.

**History Book 2000.** Present and past residents of the Kyle, White Bear, Sanctuary, Tuberose areas, submit updated history from 1980 or complete new history along with address to: History Book Committee 2000, Box 96, Kyle, Sask. S0L 1T0, fax 306-375-2999, e-mail: newtob@hotmail.com. Deadline: Sept. 1, 2000.

## LIZARDS

Word Find puzzle  
by Janice M. Peterson

When all the words in the list have been found, the letters left over will spell the solution.



© Janice Peterson

Adapt

Bask

Basilisks

Camouflage

Caves

Chameleons

Cold Blooded

Eggs

Flicking Tail

Frilled

Gecko

Gila Monster

Habitat

Iguanas

Insects

Jaws

Komodo Dragon

Mottled Skin

Moveable Eyelids

Species

Sticky Tongue

Tegu Lizards

Solution  
(13 letters):

Scaly  
reptiles

# Play Santa Every Week!

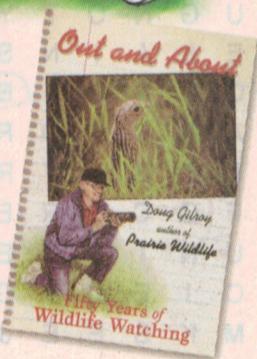
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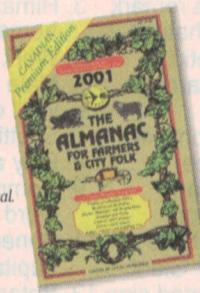
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